

University of Memphis

University of Memphis Digital Commons

U.G. Railroad magazine

Vertical files

7-6-2021

U.G. Railroad, Memphis, 1:1, 1977

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-mss-verticalfiles6>

U.G. Railroad

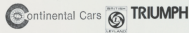
VOL. 1 NO. 1 FEBRUARY 1977



Clara Ford - Miss Black Memphis.

All
vs.
Furry Lewis
John Gunn
Still Lives
An Impossible
Dream?

If you want to get in on the
SHAPE OF THINGS THAT WIN . . .
 See **ED SLIVINSKI** at
CONTINENTAL CARS, INC.
3255 SUMMER AVE.
MEMPHIS, TENN.



323-5555

\$4995.00



THE SHAPE OF THINGS THAT WIN
TR7

U.G. Railroad

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dr. Walter Walker, President of LeMoyne-Owen College	3, 4, 5
Community Spotlight	5
Miss Black Memphis Pageant	6, 7, 8
John Gunn Still Lives	9, 10, 11
U. G. Fashion Forecast	12, 13
From Pinto Beans To Champagne	14, 15, 16
Muhammad Ali vs. Furry Lewis	17
Medical School — An Impossible Dream?	18
Look What They Done To My Song	19, 20
Poems of Life	21
First Baptist Church Beale Avenue	22, 23
Congressman Harold E. Ford	24

U. G. RAILROAD Magazine is published monthly.
 Copyright © 1977, U. G. RAILROAD Magazine.

All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Send all mail including subscription inquiries to U. G. RAILROAD Magazine, P. O. Box 3123, Memphis, Tennessee 38103. The editors assume no responsibility for unsolicited photographs and manuscripts, which must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope if the material is to be returned.

Publisher/Editor — Larry Batchlor
Art Director — George Edward Walker
Asst. Art Director — Ozzie Binton
Copy Editor — Ann Denker
General Advisor — George Hardie

Department Editors

Poetry
Men's Fashion
Women Fashion
Book Reviews
Black History

Velma Caro
Cahvin Dillard
Debra Walker
Maxine Strowder
Melvin Gross

Advertising Department

Evelyn Bond
Cahvin Dillard
Doris Thomas

Photography
Tommie Ray
Larry W. Kuzniowski
Glenn Peterson



Cover Photo,
 Miss Black Memphis,
 by Tommie Ray

FROM THE
EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



Dear Reader,

It has often been said that necessity is the Mother of Invention. In our case, the story behind the *U. G. RAILROAD* magazine is nothing more than another example of this common tale.

In Memphis today there are over 400,000 reasons why this magazine is a necessity. These 400,000 reasons - Black Memphis and its concerns - almost never make the front page or second page or twenty-second page of any publication in Memphis. The *U. G. RAILROAD* thinks that Black Memphis and its concerns are important and that they need and deserve to be recognized publicly. . .

Therefore, the *U. G. RAILROAD*.

The Editor, Larry Gene Batchlor, a native of Memphis, is the son of Mrs. Fannie Batchlor. He attended Weaver Elementary and graduated 11th in his class from Geeter High School. While in high school he was president of his junior and senior class, and was voted Most Valuable Player in basketball in 1964. He spent four years in the Air Force after high school. He attended LeMoyné-Owen College for a year, then transferred to Memphis State University, receiving his B.A. in Criminal Justice in December of 1972. While at Memphis State University he was the Communications Chairman of the Black Student Association for three years, in that capacity he started the *Old You Know?*, a Black Student Association newspaper. He is currently working on an M.A. in Education from Memphis State University in the area of Guidance and Personnel, and is in his third year of employment as Coordinator of Veteran Affairs at Shelby State Community College.

DR. WALTER WALKER
President
LeMoyné-Owen College
By David West



The following is an exclusive interview with Dr. Walter Walker, President of LeMoyné-Owen College in Memphis.

Due to the growing number of state-owned, predominantly white colleges and universities in the city, LeMoyné-Owen's significance has been a topic of controversy. Many people feel that black colleges no longer play a vital role in the advancement of minorities in the present decade. The increasing financial difficulties of black institutions of higher learning contribute even more to the above controversy.

These concerns are just typical of the changing roles of most black and private institutions of higher learning across the nation.

Some of the problems and strong points of LeMoyné-Owen College in Memphis are discussed with Dr. Walker in the following interview.

U.G. RAILROAD: Dr. Walker, are you originally from Memphis?

DR. WALKER: No. I am originally from Chicago. When I finished College, I went to the east coast, primarily, and stayed out there fourteen years. I came back to Chicago and stayed there another six years, then I came down here.

U.G. RAILROAD: When you arrived here at LeMoyné-Owen did you experience any particular problems being at a predominantly black, private institution?

DR. WALKER: No. My whole experience has been in private institutions. This is my second experience in a black, private institution and I did not experience any unusual difficulties.

U.G. RAILROAD: Do you think LeMoyné-Owen experiences any particular problems as opposed to state-owned institutions other than financial problems, which seem fairly obvious?

DR. WALKER: Yes, it may be fairly obvious that we don't have a steady source of support, but I think it is important to understand that private institutions also have to continually deal with the perception of the outside world, and we have to be aggressive in terms of obtaining support from wherever it comes. I think that most outsiders don't really appreciate what a preoccupation that is.

U.G. RAILROAD: Dr. Walker, I'm sure you're well versed on the history of LeMoyné-Owen and how it came about . . .

DR. WALKER: Right, it started out as a school for freedmen. The official founding date is

1870. It continued first as a normal school, then a junior college, and then a four year college in 1932. In 1968 it merged with Owen College which was a junior college, thus the name LeMoyné-Owen, and it's persisted ever since.

U.G. RAILROAD: What does LeMoyné-Owen College offer that the larger, predominantly white, state-owned institutions do not offer?

DR. WALKER: For one, I think the primary advantage is that students who come here don't find themselves acting as political representatives of the black race to the extent that they do in public institutions.

U.G. RAILROAD: Do you think that acting in that role hinders the educational process?

DR. WALKER: Yes, I do. It hinders the educational process. It may help some level of development in terms of politics, but the principal business of an institution of higher learning is the transmission of knowledge to students, and if students are distracted with these political issues, it does interfere with the educational process.

U.G. RAILROAD: Dr. Walker, as you know, black people in this country have certain political as well as moral obligations to black people in general. Do you think LeMoyné-Owen offers any solutions or thrusts in the direction of political or moral struggles of black people?

DR. WALKER: That's hard to say. I think our purpose is to train our students, providing them with the best background possible and I think that our struggle to survive is transmitted or should be

transmitted to our students, I think that this prepares them for the realities that they have to face. Certainly an obligation to the causes that have developed in the black community is a part of our very existence.

U.G. RAILROAD: What is LeMoyné-Owen's philosophy?

DR. WALKER: We have a motto on our seal that says "Truth, Virtue and Service." The philosophy which is the distinction between us and other schools, is that we take students where they are, having overall confidence that they can do better, and we put whatever demands that are necessary to insure that they do the best possible job.

U.G. RAILROAD: What type of students does LeMoyné-Owen cater to or try to recruit?

DR. WALKER: Ten percent of our student body comes from the upper twenty-five percent of their high school class, and forty percent of our student body comes from the lowest twenty-five percent of their class. That fact bespeaks of our commitment to get the best performance out of every one of our students.

U.G. RAILROAD: What percentage of LeMoyné-Owen students utilizes financial aid?

DR. WALKER: Eighty-eight percent.

U.G. RAILROAD: Where do most LeMoyné-Owen graduates seek employment? Do they stay in Memphis or go to other parts of the country?

DR. WALKER: That's changing. I think that historically LeMoyné-Owen graduates went into teaching in public schools and primarily, as a result, stayed in Memphis,



but we do have alumni all over the country. I suspect that as we get involved more deeply with cooperative education programs, we're going to have graduates all over the country in much larger numbers.

U.G. RAILROAD: How is the athletic program this year? Do you anticipate another championship?

DR. WALKER: No. I think an NCAA championship is a pretty hard act to follow. I think our basketball team is going to be something we can all be proud of, and that is certainly true of our girls' basketball team. Now, as to whether or not they'll be champions, who knows that?

U.G. RAILROAD: What about the athletic program in general? Does the trend seem to be toward progress or a standstill?

DR. WALKER: There are two significant trends. First is the conviction on the part of the faculty and administration that an athlete is a student first, and if he is not a good student, he will not participate in athletics. The second trend is one I identify with the women's basketball team. We feel that women have much to

gain in athletics and we're pushing that very hard.

U.G. RAILROAD: Where do you see LeMoyné-Owen going in the next ten years? Do you think that it will grow physically?

DR. WALKER: No. I think that the projections that I've been involved with tell me that LeMoyné-Owen will have about 1200 students. It will not need any new facilities. When we do expand, it will be in terms of time. For instance, the college is now open eleven and a half months per year, and that is to make a more efficient use of our physical facilities.

U.G. RAILROAD: Do you have anything you'd like to add?

DR. WALKER: Well, I'm going to give a speech to the students and faculty tomorrow which I'll summarize.

I think that during the two years that I have been down here we've been involved in constant change. The purpose behind all of those changes is to make a better environment in which learning and teaching can take place. We have not really directly attacked the question of performance of an individual faculty member or

individual student yet, but I'm convinced that the structural changes are going to put a lot of demand for top level performance of both students and faculty. I think that's what the public deserves, and any support we get should be support for the best efforts we can possibly get rather than just to keep us alive.

U.G. RAILROAD: Does this bring about a system of instructor evaluation?

DR. WALKER: We've had a system of instructor evaluation. One of the things that my experience in education has taught me is that the best evidence that education is taking place and that students are learning is that fact that students keep coming back. Students are our best barometer of the success of what we're trying to do, and if we can keep the growth trend upward and if we can make incremental changes to refine the product, I think we're in good shape.

U.G. RAILROAD: Do you foresee any Master's level programs here at LeMoyné-Owen?

DR. WALKER: No, we don't foresee any graduate education, primarily because graduate education is not for everyone. Most people don't get involved in it. Second of all, it's very expensive. I would be content with making LeMoyné-Owen the best liberal arts college in the country and not worry about graduate schools.

U. G. RAILROAD

Community Spotlight

By Tommie Ray

Ms. Baker has a BA and MA degree from Memphis State. She says that those who have been fortunate enough to gain an education should use that knowledge to help others in whatever way possible. One of her quotes on the subject is, "A storehouse of knowledge is of no use stored."

Sara Baker loves to play tennis, read (mysteries are her favorites), play piano, and most of all travel. In 1970, as a part of the Exchange Program at Memphis State, she spent five weeks in Innsbruck, Austria as an in-resident student. She has also traveled to Jamaica and the Bahamas as well as every major city in the United States.

A native Memphian, Sara graduated from Hamilton High School. As far as the future is concerned, Sara says she plans to stay with the Post Office and share her fortune with not only those who work in the Post Office but with others in the community as well.



Sara Marie Baker: Success Philosophy Bouya Career

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going" and "you can achieve anything you believe you can" are two mottos Sara Marie Baker has adopted, philosophies which have made her short lifetime a series of successful achievements.

To the more than 200 people who have been enrolled in the Postal Employees Development Center, Sara Baker signifies a sense of self-accomplishment. She is the Postal Employee Advisor and can be found in the PEDC, room 149M, offering assistance, if needed, to employees enrolled in self-instruction courses ranging from typing to electronics. So that she could be in a better position to offer assistance and be more aware of the total scope of the PEDC, Sara has studied every course offered by PEDC.



U. G. RAILROAD

Miss Black Memphis '77

By Ann Hart Denton
and Larry Batchlor

Is black beautiful? The twenty contestants in the Miss Black Memphis Pageant should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that the answer to that question is a resounding yes! Each girl, in her own right, represented black beauty, both external and internal. In many ways, it is a shame that there were not twenty first prizes.

What does Miss Black Memphis mean to black Memphians? Just another pretty face? Just another shapely body? Just another example of Memphis talent? Or is she something more? Miss Black Memphis represents every single black citizen of Memphis, and as such, she is more than a beautiful and talented individual. She is a symbol of black beauty, black talent, black intellect, black womanhood. Because of her symbolic significance, Miss Black Memphis has to be uniquely black.

Miss Ruby Wilson, special guest singer for the evening, expressed this uniqueness through her powerful and moving performance of songs whose lyrics, put together, tell the Miss Black Memphis story. She opened the evening, setting its tone, with the "Black National Anthem." Interspersed throughout the evening were her renditions of "To Be Young, Gifted and Black," "You Are the Sunshine of My Life," and "You Are So Beautiful." This last song constituted one of the more dramatic moments of the evening, as she sang it to Miss Congeniality and the five Miss Black Memphis finalists, addressing phrases to each girl individually, making "Black Is Beautiful" come alive in a very personal way.

Herb "The K," Myron Lowery, and Eddie Winston, the narrators of the pageant, did a magnificent job of weaving the standing room only audience through the entire program. The Carver High School Jazz Band, under the direction of Herman Rankins, provided competent and at times quite professional accompaniment for the majority of the musical segments of the evening. Bernard Robertson, founder of the Miss Black Memphis Pageant, dedicated the program to Miss Barbara Cooper, describing her as the hardest worker on his staff.

The Little Miss Black Memphis contest was another highlight of the evening, attracting almost as much attention and admiration from the audience as their older counterparts. This year's Little Miss Black Memphis is Daunelle Brown. First Runner-Up is Latonya Winters, and the other three finalists are Sylvia Johnson, Toni Lewis, and Cynthia Moore. The Little Miss Black Memphis Cover Girl is Oulta Bernice Fisher.

Their older counterparts, the contestants for Miss Black Memphis, began their program with an evening gown competition, followed by a swim suit competition. The judges' job became increasingly difficult during the talent competition. Some of the contestants, though they didn't make the overall finals, may well be heard from again if their performances are any indication of their capabilities.

Memphis was given abundant evidence of what it means to be young, gifted and black by Elsie Kinsey, who did a dramatic reading of Nikki Giovanni's "Peace Be Still"; Barbara Clinton, singing "Good Morning Heartache"; Beverly Amos, singing "Smoochy Room"; Linda Jones, danced to "Love Hangover"; Sharon Givhan, bringing down the house with

her Billie Holiday rendition of "Ain't Nobody's Business;" and Glendora Stevens, who received thunderous applause for her dramatic dance interpretation of Nina Simone's "Four Black Women."

The judges' decision, after much deliberation, was finally handed down: Joyce Davis, Miss Congeniality; Sadie Lewis, who has done a dynamite Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong rendition of "Mack the Knife," Fourth Runner-Up; Loretta McClure, who had done close to a professional job singing "Mr. Melody," Third Runner-Up; Portia Johnson, Second Runner-Up; Tara Bryant, First Runner-Up; and Miss Black Memphis 76-77 — Clara Ford. Tears of jubilation accompanied the crowning of Miss Ford by Ann Polk, Miss Black Memphis 75-76, bringing the crowd to its feet.



CLARA FORD
SHARON GIVHAN



Above: MYRON LOWERY & EDDIE WINSTON

Top Right: DANNIELLE BROWN & ESCORT

Middle Right: (Left to Right) JOYCE DAVIS—MISS CONGENIALITY, SADIE LEWIS—FOURTH RUNNER-UP, LORETTA MCCLURE, THIRD RUNNER-UP, PORTIA JOHNSON—SECOND RUNNER-UP, TARA BRYANT—FIRST RUNNER-UP, AND CLARA FORD—MISS BLACK MEMPHIS.

Right: SADIE LEWIS

Far Right: DANNIELLE BROWN (Left) AND LATONYA WINTERS (Right)



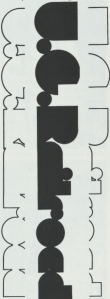
Miss Clara Ford, eighteen years old and a native Memphian, is a freshman at Memphis State University majoring in English. She is considering a career in writing and possibly in law. She graduated from Hamilton High School, where she was "Miss Hamilton High" and was voted "Most Talented Girl" in her senior class. She was also "Miss Teenage Soul 75-76."

When asked how she viewed her victory, Miss Ford replied, "Faith in yourself that you can do something; that's winning." With Miss Clara Ford reigning in this position and with this philosophy behind her, Black Memphis is also a winner.

U. G. RAILROAD



If you want to get on the



**SUBSCRIBE
TODAY!**
See Page 24
For Details.

WILLIAM "BILL" TERRELL

... Will Help You
Manage Your Own
Automobile Deal

YOU CAN'T SPELL BUICK
WITHOUT THE "U" AND "I".
LET'S YOU AND I MANAGE
YOUR BEST DEAL AT ...

CHARLES REED
BUICK COMPANY

452-1104 / 398-9168
2505 POPLAR AVENUE
MEMPHIS, TN. 38112



JOHN GUNN STILL LIVES
By Larry Batchler

Special Remarks by Billy Mack Jones, Pres., M.S.U.

On December 27, 1976, funeral services were held for John Gunn a talented Memphis State University basketball player, who in the words of a close relative "slipped away from us." Although there was daily news of John Gunn's illness, his death came as a surprise to the city of Memphis, our trust in modern medicine led most of us to believe his sickness was temporary; but even modern medicine has its limitations. John Gunn's life was suddenly taken by a disease known as the Steven Johnson Syndrome.

At the age of 21, John Gunn was the inspiration and idol of many across the city as indicated by the thousands who attended his funeral at his Alma Mater, Melrose High School. The answer as to why Melrose was chosen as a funeral site came from his former high school basketball coach and the present assistant basketball coach at Memphis State University, Coach Vertis Salls. Coach Salls said "John's mother chose Melrose as the place for his funeral, but I didn't agree with it. I went home and the more I thought about it, the more I believed that is the right place, because if there were any happy days that John had in his life, they were spent right here at Melrose". In 1974, John led his team at Melrose to a 35-0 season, collecting city and state championship titles.

Throughout the funeral the words of Coach Salls and two of John Gunn's closest friends Daryl Horton and Wayne Mabane substantiated the statement written in a sports article by George Lapides that Dr. Billy Mack Jones, President of Memphis State, read:

"If they had known more about John Gunn, if they had known from where he had come, if they had taken the time to try to understand this young man better, then Gunn could have been one of the most popular players ever to perform for Memphis State."

No one said that John Gunn was perfect but each suggested that his drive, determination and zest to, (in the words of Coach Salls) "do the best that he could do" far out-weighed his faults in the minds of most people who knew him. That in a nutshell is called, love and respect, and it is these two things that brought thousands of Memphians out to Melrose High School and made thousands of others across the city mourn his death.

Before the funeral was over, it was easy to feel that you had known John Gunn all your life and if you were not at the funeral the remarks as follows presented by Dr. Billie Mack Jones on that occasion will probably exemplify why most people there, who didn't know him personally, felt they did when it ended.

"The entire family of Memphis State University — students, faculty and staff extended its most sincere sympathy to the surviving members of John Gunn's family and gratitude is expressed to those who chose to permit this university's president to extend these eulogizing remarks on this solemn occasion."

I first met John Gunn when I was called upon to present the all tournament teams at the conclusion of the 1974 TSSAA State Tournament in Memphis. I presented him with the most valuable player award for that tournament — and encouraged him to continue his career at Memphis State. For that time, we became good friends. It was easy to admire him, and I loved to joke and carry on with him in his special fun loving way. John did much for our basketball program, and we will remember him for it and be grateful. But I am sure all of us will remember him in a variety of ways.

Certainly we will remember his enviable record of accomplishments: John entered MSU in September 1974 and he brought an impressive record with him. Closing out his career at Malibu he:

- 1) led to State Championship 30-0 record
- 2) averaged 25 points/17 rebounds that year
- 3) was voted all city, all conference, all state, all American, Mr. Basketball of 1974.
- 4) was chosen one of the five best basketball prospects in America
- 5) was chosen to play in Major Tom Tournament in Pittsburgh - highest single honor a prep star can receive
- 6) Knoxville newspaper his team was voted 3rd best ever in TSAA and Gunn 6th individually.

He was recruited by schools from all corners of the country:
SEC
SWC
Big 16
Big 8

Atlantic Coast Conference
He chose Memphis State, and we are happy that he did. There came two years, and three games of a third:
During his Freshman year he:

1. averaged 12 points/10 rebounds
2. led season high 26 points against Buffalo State
3. helped team to 20-7 record, missing only one game
4. played in NIT in Madison Square Garden

He was voted Mr. Hustle by his teammates.

In his Sophomore year he:

1. averaged 10 points/8 rebounds
2. his best game was against Louisville in Metro 11 tournament 18 points/10 rebounds/2 blocked shots - helping Tigers to 87-76 upset win
3. helped team to 21-9 record, again missing only one game and a trip to NCAA regional playoffs in Arizona.

Junior year - three games:

1. averaging 12.2 points/12.3 rebounds
2. against Drake, played with 150 degree fever, played 30 of the 40 minutes, scored 13 points and 10 rebounds
3. in that game with less than one minute to go, MSU held on to a 76-72 lead, and Gunn made the last three MSU points on free throws to give MSU a 79-74 victory.

Though tragically ill he scored the last three points for his team in the last game he was to play, a unique testimonial to his hustle and fierce competitive spirit.

To some it may seem a long way from Orange Mound to Madison Square Garden; yet John did it in his freshman year. But long, quick strides were characteristic of John's life and competitive spirit. Most of us will remember John most vividly for this one characteristic. Perhaps Denny Krump of Louisville best said it best: "I've never seen a basketball player who can get a rebound, pass to center court, and still beat the ball to the other basket."



But I did tonight; I saw John Gunn do it." It was that kind of hustle that helped Memphis State to back-to-back seasons of 30 wins (historically, there have been only five such years in MSU history) and Gunn helped lead to two of them! It was that kind of hustle that endeared John to every fan who ever saw him play.

Perhaps also, some will remember him best from the various comments which Memphis' leading sports writers supplied us.

Did Ray Edwards say it best when he wrote:

Sports competition is basic to the American ethos of things. Our greatest heroes are the young men who play games. There is some of Walter Mitty in us. We sit in the stadiums and the coliseums and watch our heroes run, jump and shoot and think that "there but for the grace of God go I." We attribute special qualities to the athletes we cheer. They are in a special category. They are larger than life. They will go on running, jumping and shooting forever. They are not subject to the same frailties of the flesh that we ordinary people endure.

THEN, SUDDENLY, UNEXPECTEDLY one is shown to be all too mortal. A man dies, and we are reminded once again how tenuous the chord that binds us to this mortal coil.

I just saw him play basketball as a senior at Malibu High School. That was the year the Golden Wildcats

went 35-0 and won the state championship. The occasion was a game against Hialeah-Egypt, which had probably the second best team in the city. Gunn dominated the game as no other player ever had in any game I had seen. He stood back there on defense in the lane in front of the basket and patrolled "fortified" back in the same style as Bill Walton used to at UCLA. THE DIFFERENCE WAS that no one tried to take it inside against Gunn. The Phoenix played out, 25 feet or more, and Gunn got from there. Each shot was either a field goal or a Gunn rebound. It was irritation unparalleled in a basketball game.

Or did Bobby Hall when he wrote:

FOR A REPORTER who covered Memphis State's team while Gunn was a Tiger, the memories will remain vivid forever. There was the time last season when the Tigers stopped off at Disneyland on the way home from Santa Barbara, California and Gunn and several of his buddies decided to take a roller coaster-type ride. The attendant ordered three passengers in each cart-like vehicle. After trying without success to wedge himself into the cart, a frustrated Gunn said, "That's a good rule for some folks, man, but they ain't s-a-s." Or, who could forget the breakfast one morning in Tulsa when big John ordered three glasses of orange juice, coffee, chocolate milk, three pancakes, two eggs and two pieces of sausage. He consumed it all, too, except for one of the glasses of juice, when he accidentally dumped in his lap in his haste to taste all the goodies. Yes, Gunn could eat. The only meal he ever turned down in my presence was aboard a plane when he chose to sleep, only until he had quick time to remember his decision. GUNN!

HE DECIDED to order pancakes. And when he realized the passenger in the next seat—the wasn't eating, he asked why not. "That's why you're so little and scrawny," he said. "If you're not going to eat, why don't you order some pancakes and I'll eat them for you." That's what happened, too.

Or perhaps George Lapides said it best when he wrote:

The record book will show it as an 80-82 Memphis State victory. But few will remember the score or the details for 1980. No one will forget that it was the night John Gunn passed away. It is difficult to comprehend — this strapping young man, the picture of health, vibrant and outgoing, so full of life. One wants to know: how could it happen? There are no answers. It is one of the most mysterious of life's mysteries.

No, Gunn was not the perfect person. But who really is? John had his faults. Just like the rest of us. Some people were intolerant of them, but some people were tolerant. If they had known more about John Gunn, if they had known from where

he had come, if they had taken the time to try to understand this young man better, there could have been one of the more popular players ever to perform for Memphis State. LET IF he said that Gunn was a competitor. He played his game hard and he did everything else the same way. John Gunn was a young man who was trying his hardest to pull himself up by the boot straps. Oh, sometimes he'd slip and fall back, but John learned from every experience. It took a man to do that. But the short Editorial in The Commercial Appeal summed up most appropriately by stating:

"JOHN GUNN will be remembered as one of Memphis State University's best basketball players. He will be remembered as a strong competitor, who worked as hard on defense as he did on offense. He tried to be a team player. He tried, as hard as he could, to excel. And the extent to which he succeeded was a major contribution to the success the Tigers have had in the last three years."

But Gunn's all-too-short career is no more important than the effort he made to get himself "straightened out," as he called it. His failure was those of a boy from a broken home who "ran with the wrong crowd." His accomplishments were those of a young man who saw the need to improve himself as a person as well as a player.

Other young men and women, saddened by his loss, can learn from his example.

John played his last game on December 11, and fought a valiant fight for ten days. Now we are told that we will see him no more — but how shall we believe it?

1. each time — as Larry Finch has said, each time a white head band flashes by, John Gunn will be going before our eyes.
2. and each time a player clutches the front of his playing trousers, straining them to his knees as he bends over a weary search for breath, we will remember that we saw John Gunn do that a hundred times or more.
3. and every time an MSU player begins an out of bounds play by yelling TWO and holding two fingers aloft — as John did so often while holding the ball under the basket — many of us will see John standing there, impatient to begin his favorite out of bounds play.
4. and everytime for years to come when the lights dim and the spotlight shines the oneness of the starting Tiger team, what fan, or teammate, will fail to see John Gunn run to center court, and also the hands of Little A, or Tree, or Dexter, or Johnny B, with his infectious grin and his enormous enthusiasm.

We will see him again and again, and feel his presence, and we will remember.

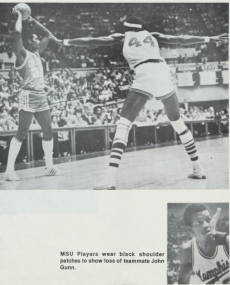
For no man dies who lives on in the hearts of his friends."



To emphasize the impression John Gunn leaves with Memphis, the lyrics of the song "Pass Me Not" sang by St. John Baptist Church Choir - Barron - at the funeral seem most appropriate.

Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior
Hear My Humble Cry
While On Others Thou Art Calling
Please, Don't Pass Me By . . .
because as their voices echoed throughout the auditorium it would be hard to believe that each person there did not join in with the background in his own special way and ask God, "Please, Don't, Please, Don't, Pass John by."

U. G. RAILROAD
Photos by Phyllis Smith



MSU Players wear black shoulder patches to show loss of teammate John Gunn.



U. G. FASHION FORECAST

The U. G. RAILROAD, in this and preceding issues, will not only give our readers an up-to-date Fashion Forecast but a complete run down of all new innovations that have arrived on the Fashion scene.

In doing so we are simply calling our look U. G. Fashions because the look we will project will be a combination of other looks selected to offer the best in all around fashions that can express individuality . . . good taste . . . serviceability . . . and value. U. G. Fashions looks are selected from the inventory of various retailers throughout the city.

Now, what is in store for spring? On a recent trip to the NAMSFB Fashion Show (National Association of Men's Sportswear Buyers) this past September in New York City at the Statler Hilton Hotel, the strong appeal of white, red, navy, khaki, and black colors was evident. These colors were showing up in cruisewear,

clothing and sportswear, and were carried out in the most unusual concepts. Blue jeans stitched with white thread rather than the customary orange or green so popular in Europe, and then trimmed with red piping. White suits mostly double breasted . . . white pullover shirts with blue stitching and red buttons . . . white pleated slacks with a series of blouse tops. Also most evident at the show was a series of draw string tops and bottoms . . . slacks with draw string waists and bottoms . . . tops with drawstring waists. Fisherman and string knits and eyelet knits seemed to be the most popular knit tops shown. These tops are light in weight and offer comfort as well as good looks. The leisure suit was not there, but the look that replaced it was a new concept in sportswear.

Sportswear is now a series of separate but related items . . . and now a person can put together his or her own outfits to express that person's taste.

U. G. Fashions suggests that the European stiff laped French suit that we are so familiar with now seems to be slipping from the fashion conscious male's wardrobe and giving way to the newer softer shoulder suit that has the British influence . . . the body is still surpressed at the waist and the slacks are slightly wider at the knee . . . the straight leg pant is still attempting to make a fashion dent in the market but does not quite have the flair of the wider pants.

It is U. G.'s contention that the vested suit will not be as strong this spring as the double breasted and pleated slacks suits which we are going to be seeing.

U. G. RAILROAD



From Pinto Beans To Champagne

"An Evening of Soul:" A Personal Account

By Jacqueline Haley

Parking was not a difficult feat. There were not many other cars around. I felt a moment's disappointment, but I stepped onto the leafy apartment grounds in anticipation. It was a lovely fall evening in October. I guessed it to be about 6:00 as the sun had relaxed quietly in the west.

I never really understood why she asked me to come to the first meeting. I had taken a course from her, Voice and Articulation, but it has offered no real opportunity to portray a talented personality. Later it was to be discovered that she offered an opportunity to anyone who would try.

Erma Lavern Clanton, born in Memphis, Tennessee and a product of the Memphis City School System, had made it to Memphis State University just in time. This was apparent when I walked into a room filled with expectant faces and eyes that smiled at me although I was not known to them. Awesome wonder was the term that described the state of all the students present.

Ms. Clanton began her meeting, a meeting which ultimately asked the questions "Are you willing?", "Are you ready?" and "Can you give total commitment?" The answers were manifested November 30, 1971 with the first performance of "An Evening of Soul."

It all began in the mind of a woman who saw the need for some constructive involvement on the campus of Memphis State University. There was much political and racial unrest on campuses throughout our nation at the time her dream was conceived.



(Left to Right) (Top) W. Otis Higgs, Dianne Reed; (Bottom) Mrs. Willie Mitchell, Erma Clanton.

She recognized in militant attitudes, disenchantment with ideals and goals, and a chorus of defiant voices against an unstable system of wrongs, a rich vein of energy that needed only to be channeled in a direction more employable than rioting, deferring dreams, or giving up entirely on righting that which could be corrected.

And in this original Reader's Theatre Presentation, she achieved just that. Many of the frustrated students recruited for this "intended" one night performance caught on to a new sense of pride and discovered that within themselves Black was indeed Beautiful.

We worked very hard toward November 71, many of us admonishing Erma that she was getting in too far over her head. She knew little of theatre in its truest sense, but she had a message - and we had a purpose. United we would stand!

"Surprise!" was the name of the game at one point, however. I'll never forget the evening Erma asked Deborah Manning Ingram to read "A Change Is Gonna Come." Deborah read it aloud and interpreted it effectively. But after she had come to the end, she asked, "Miss Clanton, may I sing it?" As this was not what she was immediately about, Erma nodded offhandedly and added (this time more enthusiastically and with greater interest), "Sure, we'd be glad for you to!" Deborah opened her mouth, and we struggled to close ours, but that night nobody doubted that a change had truly come! The girl was full of it! To us it was an omen, to Ms. Clanton it was an encouragement, later it was amusing! Erma had actually tapped one in a vein she'd only wished to channel.

One evening, Evelyn (Hall) Bond, the assistant to Erma, Deborah Ingram and I went home with Erma after classes to rest. These were her quiet moments. It was during these hours that we grew to know her as a friend and an ally when needed. She was a good cook, too! That night the cast omitted Dynamics, which was first on the agenda of each rehearsal, and enjoyed what Gregory Siggers, narrator of the production, termed "Soul at its best!" We slurped pinto beans and combed until the pot was cleaner than freshly washed.

Closeness was just being defined for me at Memphis State University. Until I became a member of this theatrical family, I felt very displaced on campus

because of its size and impersonality. At first I thought maybe I was over-dramatizing my own inner feelings until in conversation, it was revealed that many others of the cast had only chosen to stay in school because of their involvement with "Soul." They too had found something to identify with and cling to - not a crutch, but a purpose.

A lot of positive things have resulted in "Soul." Many present at that first meeting have since graduated, married, accepted meaningful employment offered because of exposure "Soul" afforded, left the city or branched into other areas of Black Theatre.

But surely Erma's greatest thrill had to be opening night... It was in the Lab Theatre. The audience was filled. Men, women and children sat on the floors, stood in the doorways, and occupied every vacant space not designated as part of the stage. The crowd was not restless but they were unmistakably awaiting the commencement of "An Evening of Soul."

Backstage we dressed, repeated lines to each other, straightened collars and hairtyles, inhaled and exhaled audibly, and tried our best to look COOL. Only four of the thirty cast members had ever been in a staged production, and remembering this did not work wonders for our nervous systems. But now it was eight o'clock... no more time to remember. We joined hands and bowed out heads. Deborah led us in prayer... amen.

The music flowed. The houselights were lowered. Gregory sauntered downstage and began: "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to 'An Evening of Soul.'"

From that point on, I watched the audience from the piano. I saw empathy during the Slavery scene. I watched them identify with the Blues. In the Gospel segment everybody participated. They loved our portrayals of the Black Man's love for his Black Woman and the Woman's for her Man in the Passion scene.

Then the entertainment was over...

They were angered with us in Soul Protest. Soul Pride convinced them that Black is Beautiful. Nikki Giovanni's "Peace Be Still" awakened a lot of minds, and "A Happy Day" excited their very arms and feet. Everybody was up, arms flailing about, and everybody sang...

Just too good to end, we thought soberly, as we spoke of the experiences and the message we'd brought. But if you can believe in the fates, ours was good. For in the audience that night was Edwin Howard of the **Memphis Press-Scimitar**, the Theatre and Movie Reviews columnist and a man we are eternally grateful to. We did not know him then, neither did we know he was in the audience, but as he watched "Soul," he was positively impressed. The next day, Erma clipped from her paper an article headed "Soul Deserves Encore."

The review was so great for us that we actually visualized performing again, not really dreaming or daring to dream that we would do the same production. Yet when the chairman of the Speech and Drama Department, Dr. Jack Sloan, approached Erma with the idea of several weekend performances with a promise of more cooperation from the department, she answered yes, confident that she had the support and commitments needed.

It's been a year now, and Erma still answers yes. Sure, the cast has changed. The times have changed, too. But the format is and will forever be the same.

Opening night, August 6, 1976, Playhouse on the Square, I was in the audience. As I watched, tears filled my eyes. I focused with pride on a group of people - those performing and those who were past performers - who had a purpose and had stayed with it.

As Dianne Reed led them in "Ain't Got' No Nobody Turn Me Around," I remembered a cast that had convinced others of a purpose. I remembered a beautiful, beautiful black man, Isaac Hayes, who was so convinced that the purpose was good that he joined the cast and performed one week with us in the Big Red Theatre at Memphis State, drawing a record-breaking crowd. One night the intermission lasted a full hour while the fire marshalls cleared the aisles and doorways.

In that same week, he presented \$2000 to the Speech and Drama Department at Memphis State to begin a scholarship for students interested in Black Theatre. Then I remembered a determined cast who two years later deposited \$10,000 more in the Isaac Hayes Scholarship Fund, money which has been earned from travels in the Tri-State area and at local high schools and churches.

I hate to overdramatize my inner feelings again, but as the pianist, David Warr, began the prelude for the song Erma had written, "Blessed With Soul," I stood. For I saw not only the fifteen on stage, but I was also viewing from 100 to 150 faces of others who had truly paid their dues: Samuel Henderson, Richard Oliver, Jasper Hirsch, Altha Stewart, Joyce Small, John Donald, Harold "Hard Rock" Gentry, Betty Phillips, Maurice Johnson, Belinda Campbell, Celestine Staples,

Peter McNeal, Raymond Neal, Deborah Hardin, Monica Franklin, Leroy Henderson . . . The chorus began to swell in my ears as I heard the last "Thank God Almighty For Giving Us Soul . . ."

The audience filled out excitedly conversing, but not until each had spoken with cast members. Again my eyes filled as I noted the refreshments at the reception and I thought, "from pinto beans to champagne . . ."

Otis Higgs, Rufus Thomas, Callie Crossley and others surrounded Erma. She was mentally preparing herself for the future performances. I heard someone whisper questions that surely must have rested in the minds of many: "What makes her do it?" "How can she do it?" I could have answered, but I'd have to get overdramatic again. Overdramatizing or not, however, Erma still has a purpose and that purpose is the same:

Touch somebody's life as you pass them.
You may never pass this way again.

It's not far -
Reach out in love and touch somebody -
You'll be surprised how soon
That same touch will come back to you.

Right on Erma Clanton! Right on "Soul" cast!

U. G. RAILROAD



Alan Abis inc.
Unique Men's Store

Find
Your
Fashions
at the
Fashion
Leader

Alan Abis



Unique Men's Store

Alan Abis inc.

PHONE 323-2255
3086 POPLAR AVE.
MEMPHIS, TN. 38111

MUHAMMAD ALI

VS.

FURRY LEWIS

BEALE STREET
COMES ALIVE
AGAIN

By Larry Batchlor
&
David West

Muhammad Ali was in town to celebrate the opening of the Towne II Cinema at 380 Beale under its current name of Muhammad Ali Theater. The night began with a more than spectacular showing of beauty of fashions by the Miles Black Memphis contestants for '76-'77 and was followed by the great blues singer and guitar player, "Furry" Lewis.

Mr. Lewis, now 83 years old, had to be led onto the stage by two escorts. Blind, half stumbling, half walking, with his equally as old walking cane, "Furry" finally made it on stage. Once seated he remarked, jokingly of course, "Get your hands off me, you don't have to help me." His sense of humor was more than evident as he told a joke about his days on Beale when he played his guitar on the corner for whatever change passersby would spare: "When things got slow I used to say 'please help me, I'm blind and I got seven children. Please help Furry.' One man asked me, 'if you are blind, how did you get seven children?' I told him I couldn't see what I was doing."



Furry fumbled for his guitar, waving his hands about until his fingers touched its neck. Once the guitar was firmly in his grip, however, Furry held the audience in his grip as well. He stunned the audience, sending chills through it as if up and down one collective spine, illustrating his reputation as one of the greatest blues singers and guitar players of all times.

Several events followed: the dedication of a poem to Ali by Hurbie Glass and the presentation of a very good look alike portrait of Ali by a young talented painter named Larry Walker. Ali went on to play with Congressman Ford and City Councilman Mike Cody as though shadowboxing, in between swapping real punches with several professional fighters: Dan Kiser, All-Navy Heavyweight Champion; Jimmy Cross, Southern Heavyweight Champion; and Tony Gardner.

Ali freely addressed the audience and the people on the stage who dared to speak to him. After all, you never know what to expect out of Ali except that he's going to win. There were two sideline fights that nobody expected. One involved Harold Ford Jr. vs. Muhammad Ali during the second round of the Congressman's boxing debut. It seems Harold Jr. suspected foul play and went to the rescue of his father with

swinging fists, flying shoes and streaming tears. The record was set straight by little Harold's father and all ended well.

However, the Main Event was not seen or heard by all who were there. It came with no announcement. Muhammad Ali met face to face with Furry as Mr. Lewis attempted to exit the stage. Ali had watched and listened to Furry complete his last number, and as Furry was trying to step down, the champ punched him in the face with a "how are you feeling?" Furry broke down, crying "I'm so glad, I never thought I'd see you."

For a night, Beale Street was again alive like the legends have it, when the heroes of the people would laugh, talk, entertain, and just be one of the people. If you were on Beale Street when it was really Beale Street, you would know that "people" means all the people, black and white alike. Ali you needed was a desire to get down and let the good times roll, all night long.

Ali ended the show on a serious note, stating that he would like to get the good current films for his theater. He also promised to bring exceptional talent such as Stevie Wonder, James Brown, and The Stylistics to the Muhammad Ali Theater. In parting, he left us all a message in his poem "Truth." Ali's and Furry's presence on Beale Street on the same stage was one of the most phenomenal things that has happened in Memphis. And that really is the truth.

U. G. RAILROAD



MEDICAL SCHOOL — AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

By IDA M. MOORE

Each year, thousands of college students declare themselves pre-medical students and begin preparation for application to medical school. Each year, pre-professional advisors at colleges everywhere outline programs of study for these students. The student's preparation is arduous, time-consuming and very demanding; the work of the pre-professional advisor is equally demanding and time-consuming, for the advisor must finally evaluate the student and pass judgment on the student's fitness for medical school.

Is medical school an impossible dream for most students? Is there any way a student can assure himself of admission to medical school? Does it even make sense to try to get into medical school? Studies show that for the 1973-1974 school year, some 40,506 applications were filed to the medical schools in the United States. Of the applications filed, 14,335 were successful in gaining admission to medical school. An analysis of the above figures shows that each student has a one in three chance of being accepted to the study of medicine. Additionally, it shows that thirty eight percent of first time applicants were admitted, contrasted with 26 percent of those reapplying.* With the knowledge that any applicant has only a one in three chance of being accepted to study medicine, what can a person do to improve his chances of being selected?

Anyone giving serious consideration to becoming a medical doctor should begin preparation in high school. The high school curriculum should include courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics to prepare him for the courses he must take and do well in in college. Pre-medical students without the above background courses usually find themselves at a disadvantage in college because they must compete with other students who have had all of the above courses and are prepared for the college work required of them.

While in college, the pre-medical student must be aware that his total college performance will be evaluated when he submits his application to medical school. Grades, courses taken, quarter/semester course loads, grades earned, consistency in achievement and extracurricular activities will all be considered when the application is considered. In addition, the pre-professional advisors will be asked to evaluate the applicant as a student and as a potential physician. It is extremely important, therefore, that the pre-medical student work closely with the pre-professional advisor in selecting courses, course distribution, and in timing the pre-admissions test.

Specifically, then, what can a student do to assure himself of the best possible chance of being admitted to medical school? There are some very definite factors which will help make any student more competitive when he enters the application process. The pre-medical student should choose his college wisely. He should choose one with a very competitive science curriculum because grades earned at such an institution have real meaning to an admissions committee. The student would do well to choose a college which already has graduates in medical school, the

pre-medical student should work closely with the pre-medical advisor at the college in scheduling courses, and the pre-admissions test for medicine in no case should be taken before all of the required courses have been completed. The student will, of course, need to earn good grades in all of the courses he takes. The pre-medical student can and should choose extracurricular activities which suit his interests and highlight his interest in people. He should investigate the medical field thoroughly and be able to verbalize his reasons for wanting to become a physician.

When the pre-medical student reaches his junior year, he should begin looking at medical schools throughout the country. He should check their requirements (grade point averages, test scores, residency requirements, etc.) against what he has to offer and match the schools' requirements with his qualifications. Then the student should apply only to those schools where he has a reasonable chance of being accepted.

If all of the above suggestions are followed, the student should have a good chance of being admitted to medical school. For many students, medical school is an impossible dream which will become very frustrating as they pursue their goal of being admitted to professional study in medicine. For many other students who very carefully structure their preparation for medical school, medical school is a dream that can be realized.

U. G. RAILROAD

*Medical School Admission Requirements, 1976-77, U.S.A. and Canada, 26th Edition, Association of American Medical Colleges, Washington, D.C., 1975.

LOOK WHAT THEY DONE TO MY SONG

By John McCluskey

Reviewed by

Maxine S. Strawder

Midnight Special on a sabre track moving moving,
First stop Mercy and the last
Hallelujah.

These closing lines from Robert Hayden's "Runagate Runagate" capture the rhythms, the preciseness and the wide range of experience in John McCluskey's first novel, **Look what They Done To My Song** (New York: Random House, 1974).

Mack and his horn set out from Santa Fe to join a cut-buddy on a gig in Ohio with enough train fare to reach Kansas City. Music is his North Star. His mother's hopes for him in the ministry seem unlikely. For you to have seen "Bird" or "Prez," Mack gets down with the best of them:

We alternated turns and on one song I laid a lush line and a student of Black music stuck in that town asked if I had ever heard of Gene Ammons (p. 77).

Woodshedding to refine his craft on a deserted beach in Cape Cod, Mack is approached by Jupiter Sims, the ragman, and hails him:

What you know good?

Nothing, except that some folks still tryin' to figure you out even though you been here a month. I guess they's trying to figure out what you lookin' for here and when you gone get it and how (p. 8).

Their exchange involves more than cigarettes, wine bottle talk and a tip on a club where Mack can sit in. With it McCluskey creates one of many flashbacks. We could be in Ellison's¹ Harlem with the old man selling yams or get further into Mack, the musician, through A.B. Spellman's² account of Ornette Coleman.

McCluskey's language is both lyric and gut-level when dealing with the man-woman thing:

A man can usually find out where he's at and where he's going by the type of woman he is messing with (p. 14).

Michelle helps make isolated New Bedford bearable. She defies her mother to warm her reflection in Mack's embraces. Mae, Sessie Mae whose voice runs through his mind wherever he travels: All four women of Simone, and more . . . So cold she'd throw water on a drowning man . . . We battled hard and long to stay real for one another (p. 74).

McCluskey knows his people, sketches their folk wisdom with respect:

Mack, a nigga ain't nowhere unless he can work with his hands. A brain can't build a house.

And their hard times with understanding:

About a month before you came on, another dude was fired for stealing steaks. Now all of us copped something while we was down there. On what we make you have to. But Rufus, this man who got fired, stole forty-seven steaks. So slykes put the pressure on and C.J. cracked. He put the finger on Rufus to keep his little funky hustle. (p. 147).

B
BRUNNER, INC.

3 LOCATIONS . . .

Total Graphic Services!

PRINTING DIVISION
507 N. Parkway/Memphis, TN. 38105
901/526-7331

OFFICE SUPPLY DIVISION
895 E. Brooks/Memphis, TN. 38116
901/332-4892

SPEED GRAPHICS DIVISION
1847 Winchester
Memphis, TN. 38116
901/332-4313

Mack and his partner Ubangi bootleg homemade cranberry wine to an armybase and try to hustle encyclopedias to suburban Roxbury. Both escapades end in near disaster, net them little cash, but provide side-splitting amusement for the reader.

Mack as hero is a combination of musician, street nigger and philosopher:

I want to work something where we can have all kinds of people in, people who would never come to church otherwise, sitting there under the same roof . . .

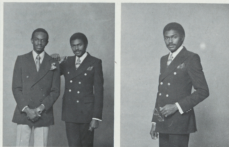
'Mix the righteous and the unrighteous, Mack?' Antar asks. That's very noble of you, but it is discipline which has been lacking in us . . . without it we have no power . . . Some can accept discipline and some can't. Those who see must help the others.'

Maybe so, but where do the chosen few go without the nasty no-good sinners . . . In the wilderness to trade truths? Do they shy away from the funkiness of things? (pp. 234-235).

Look What They Done To My Song does not shy away from the righteous or the unrighteous.

1. Robert Hayden, "Runagate Runagate", Bernard W. Bell, ed., *Afro-American Poetry* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972), p. 64.
2. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1952), chap. 13.
3. A. B. Spellman, *Four Lives in the Bebop Business* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), pp. 77-150.

U. G. RAILROAD



Julius Lewis

Mid Town - Union at Kimbrough • Eastgate - Park at White Station

U. G. RAILROAD Magazine is published monthly.

Send all mail including subscription inquiries to U. G. RAILROAD Magazine, P.O. Box 3122, Memphis, Tennessee 38103.

POEMS OF LIFE

By Veima Cato

Only a year or so ago, I stumbled across the work of a woman who no longer lives. That fact alone may not be that interesting . . . but the story of this woman's life and death is. Paulette Graves, a name I've given her, committed suicide some six years ago. She was young, gifted and Black. She had a college degree and was seeking another. Although the product of a broken home, Paulette was well cared for and loved by her parents. She lived not far from Memphis and was quite popular with friends and relatives.

The question you are probably asking is why then did she kill herself. Well, I didn't know Paulette personally . . . I can't say for sure "Why?" But my guess is that she was discontent with personal relationships, where people deal only on the periphery of life—not touching the central and intimate part of human nature. Paulette was tired of playing games and having them played on her. She wanted to get off the chaotic revolution of this world and she did - her way. As I stated before, that is my guess as to why she committed suicide . . . but now you, the reader, may be able to possibly explain why.

#1

I know a place called joy,
It's found with the map of your smile.

#2

Laugh
You make the world seem gay.
Dancing liles sparkle in your eyes;
Translucent filaments color
flow from deep within
As the soft lingering sound
called laughter
emerges from you soul.

#3

Forgetting is a very slow process
It involves a lot of time
and courage. When you sit by
yourself and just think, emotions
are hard to restrain.

#4

I've been gone -
Gone to where the clouds hang
low
over flaming horizons.
Where cloven hoofed beings
probe for ones soul
With tridents that burn to touch.
Gone to a subworld
of the mind
An aching world of
memories and wine.

A world of escape
Where I thought I was safe
Where alone,
I could not be hurt.

But the pain thrived
on my solitude
The pain that was guarded
from without
Was born within

From the depths of my own
psychic hell
My mind yielded upon itself -
tortured itself
With old thoughts, old hates,
old tears, and new lies.

#5

Silently shimmering across
the stillness of the pool
a ripple forms.
Leaves float gently along
the flowing liquid path,
gliding to their destinies,
I, a leaf follow the ripple of
life across the pool of
eternity;
Searching the depths for
meaning
found only in the
relief of death.

U. G. RAILROAD



BEALE STREET REPERTORY COMPANY, INC. 1967 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee 38104





**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
BEALE AVENUE**

The First Baptist Church Beale Avenue was founded by slaves and is the Mother Church of all the black Baptist Churches in the Mid-South and Mid-West. It grew out of a series of praise meetings conducted by Rev. Scott Keys at his residence on Beale near Turley St., about 1854. Rev. Lewis Gales was its first pastor. He was succeeded by a white minister, Rev. D. Bateman, who served until 1863, when Rev. Morris Henderson, a black minister, took charge. During the latter's brilliant pastorate, the membership moved to Beale and 4th Sts., where it occupied the basement of a white Baptist church until the church was destroyed by fire." (L. George W. Lee - "Beale Street")

Then it began meeting in the basement of the old Randolph Building at the corner of Beale and Main, and a white minister, Rev. S. G. Tillmon, was chosen as pastor. A white congregation held services upstairs. Soon the black congregation moved to the

corner of Beale and Lauderdale, which was a suburb of the city and was owned by the Irish people.

The church moved to 379 Beale when one of the slaves' master was instrumental in acquiring this land through the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York at a cost of \$2,000. The land shall always be used by the church or shall revert to the Society. The church held services in a brush arbor — a shelter made of brushwood. This was a very trying and challenging time for the church. But soon they erected one of the most beautiful churches of the denomination. This structure was built with brick and mortar made by the hands of man with the faith and trust the membership had in God.

A dedication service was held in October, 1863, and construction continued on the building for 22 years. Stories vary as to how the money was collected for the church: (1) money to pay for the building was collected in wash pots and tubs; (2) shovels and buckets were used to gather up the

collected money; (3) members saved their pennies in wheelbarrows and brought their money to church. But no matter how it was collected, when it was counted, there was \$100,000!

The church was built with designs by the famous Memphis architect E. C. Jones. It was completed and dedicated on November 29, 1885. It has wood columns soaring to a curved ceiling and heavy wood doors still locked with a piece of lumber across them. After moving into the Mother Church, two services were required to administer the Lord's Supper to the 2500 members. Therefore, those served in the day were requested to remain home at night so the other could be served.

Many important meetings and conferences were held in this old historical building. General Ulysses S. Grant addressed the black populace of Memphis from its pulpit and worshipped within its consecrated walls as did many other great men, such as a Congressman Oscar DePriest and Colonel Roscoe Simmons.

Atop the tower of the church was once a statue of John the Baptist. It became a tradition in itself, attracting the attention and interest of visitors from all over the nation. It was part of the atmosphere and legend of Beale St. It was that statue, in fact, more than any other thing, that brought a young black named Handy to Memphis from Florence, Alabama. Years ago, excursionists returning to Florence from weekends in Memphis always had glowing reports to make and tall tales to tell of the bright lights and wonders of Beale. None of these stories appealed to the imagination of young Handy so much as those pertaining to the big church with the fabulous statue on top. So W. C. Handy came to Memphis to see it — and returned later to make musical history with his blues songs. It is said that he worshipped in this church and that it was an inspiration to him in writing gospel songs.

But that statue is gone now. One night a man, crazed with drink and anger, climbed up to the church roof and hacked off one of John the Baptist's arms. Years later in 1938 the statue diverted a bolt of lightning that seriously damaged the church. Workmen went up to repair the damage, and one of them dropped the unsteady figure of John from his high place. John's body was made of galvanized tin, so it bent grotesquely. The head was made of sturdier lead and didn't crumble, but one of the workmen sold it to a junk man for the price of scrap lead.

In 1923 because of debts, the property was lost to creditors. New Prospect Baptist Church took over the building, and some members of the old church united with them to form New Prospect Beale Avenue Baptist Church. In 1925 a disastrous fire gutted the building and destroyed much of

its history. Due to financial hardship and the fire, the property was lost again.

Through the zeal and determination of the members and the help of God, the church was regained, and the members took their original name First Baptist Church Beale Avenue. The church again prospered and grew to its peak membership of nearly 3000 in the late 1930's.

Now the membership is about 300. Times have changed, but this old historical landmark will always challenge the changing trend of time. The edifice of this church opens her arms from north, south, east, and west to welcome all who may come. The members have served faithfully under the leadership of the aforementioned pastors and the late Rev. R. N. Countee, Rev. Taylor Nightingale, Rev. P. J. Jackson, Rev. Henry Clements, Rev. J. P. Hurt, Rev. J. C. Bowers, Rev. J. L. Lewis, Rev. B. J. Perkins, and Rev. G. A. Long. It has also served faithfully under Rev. A. A. Hill, who now resides in Illinois; Rev. A. W. Williams of this city also a faithful member; and Rev. E. J. Wilson, who is retired and living in California. Each of these ministers made a great contribution in service to this Mother Church. The present pastor, Rev. James A. Jordan, came in 1961. Many spiritual and material improvements have been made in the church and entire Beale Street area.

In 1967 the church faced the threat of destruction because of urban renewal, but it raised enough money to replace wooden fire escapes with metal ones and replace worn out wiring so that it could meet minimum requirements. Since 1971 it has been listed on the National Register of Historical Places in the National Park Service because of its age and beauty as a building and

because of its uniqueness as the first brick church built by free blacks in the South.

The church always has and still does feed the needy. It has a Day Care Center for children up to age 6 whose mothers work. Truthfully God has blessed this church. It is trying to preserve its historical landmark so that in years to come people will look upon it with pride and know that while Beale Street — the one Memphis street known around the world — is noted for its Blues, there is still a place on Beale noted for its long history of Christian worship where songs of praise go up to God and that this Christian Banner is still flying high, and believes that if we keep the faith, keep trusting in God, we will reach our Goal.

U. G. RAILROAD



**GLENN PETERSON
PHOTOGRAPHY**

COMPLETE
PROFESSIONAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SERVICE

2011 UNION AVE. / SUITE 206
MEMPHIS, TN. 38104

PH. 726-0917





CONGRESSMAN HAROLD E. FORD

On January 4, 1977, Congressman Harold E. Ford was sworn in as a member of the 95th United States Congress. His overwhelming re-election victory on November 2 insured his return to our Nation's Capitol as the U.S. House Representative for the Eighth Congressional District of Tennessee. According to Congressman Ford, "My official swearing in has only confirmed my re-election by the Eighth District on Election Day. I have been elected by the people to represent them in Congress. And, as a Seated member of the 95th Congress, I shall do just that."

During his first term in Congress as a member of the 94th Congress, Congressman Ford was elected to the powerful committee on Ways and Means. He is also a member of the Select Committee on Aging. And, on September 21, 1976, the Congressman was appointed to the newly created House Select Committee on Assassinations which is investigating the murders of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He is also a member of the Subcommittee that will investigate the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King who was slain in Memphis, April 4, 1968.

Congressman Ford has achieved great heights during his freshman term as our Congressman. Moreover, he has won the respect of both his colleagues and constituency. It is because of his very fine first term in the 94th Congress that Congressman Ford is indeed deserving of another term in the 95th.

If you would like to submit articles, short stories, poetry, or letters to the editor, please mail to:

U. G. RAILROAD
P.O. Box 3123
Memphis, Tenn. 38103

All letters to the editor will become the property of the U. G. Railroad. Articles, short stories and poetry will be returned at the request of the author on submission. All articles, short stories and poetry entries must include a return stamped, self-addressed envelope.

**Subscribe
today to the
U. G. RAILROAD!!!**

I would like to subscribe to the **U. G. RAILROAD** Magazine at the below rate:

\$8.00 for one year (saving me \$4.00 under the newsstand price of \$12.00 for twelve issues.)

Miss _____
Mrs. _____
Mr. _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment enclosed

U. G. RAILROAD Magazine
P.O. Box 3123
Memphis, Tn. 38103

NAACP'S

Memphis Branch
FIRST ANNUAL
FREEDOM
FUND DINNER

Presents:

BEN L. HOOKS

March 19, 1977 -

7:00 P.M.

Holiday Inn Rivermont

